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"HONEST BURGHERS"

LE FAOUËT AND ITS PATRON SAINT

BY ROBERT RANGER

With original illustrations by Walter Nettleton.

HILE it may be true that the artist finds material everywhere, it is none the less true that he finds more in some places than in others. No doubt Albrecht Dürer could create pictures in a bare attic, but Fortuny was wise to seek subjects with his guitar, his cakes of chocolate, and his color-box, among the Spanish shepherds in their mountain homes.

Walter Nettleton, with the conservative instinct of the artist, has found in Brittany material for some quaint sketches—sketches that make the color-tubes restless in the boxes of all lovers of the picturesque.

Here, for instance, is the stone statue of Sainte Barbe (patroness of artillerymen !), who watches steadfastly over the souls of the good villagers of Le Faouët, a little town old enough to be lately rediscovered by some adventurous knights of the brush. These queer old places come to light with all the acquired interest that a child finds in the toy that has been upon the top-shelf of a seldom visited closet. And, luckily, there are odd corners enough in this old earth of ours to give promise of such discoveries so long as linseed-oil shall flow.

Whether we should see just what Mr. Nettleton and his confrères have seen is another question. It is the artist's province to show us what we ought to see. Perhaps if you or I had been there, we should have

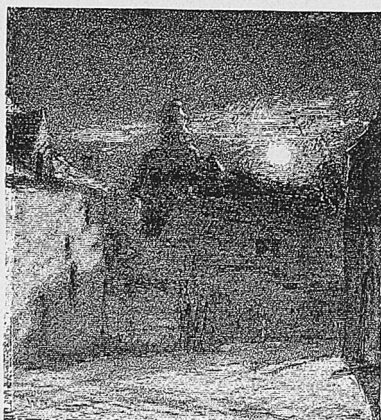
been sound asleep in the hotel—if it

has a hotel—just when Mr. Nettleton caught the moon rising above the distant church so as to cast that veil of dreamy shadow over the old walls. Or, if we had come upon the church in daylight, we might have stood by the steps that lead toward the door, instead of cunningly placing ourselves where the side-road begins to run down hill, and where the wheel-barrow obligingly accents that fact and makes us understand the delightful irregularity of the old town's streets.

There is something appropriate in the old dove-cote tower perched upon the roof of the



THE STONE STATUE OF ST. BARBE



THE OLD CHURCH BY MOONLIGHT

church. If one does not know the significance of the dove-cote in French history, its importance as an appanage of the noble families, and its strict regulation and limiting under old statutes, at least no one can forget the descent of the dove from heaven or its return with the olive-branch to the ark. Probably this dove-cote of Le Faouët was part of the common property of the village, and remains as its other old things remain—because, when the schoolmaster

goes abroad he follows the well-beaten paths, leaving by-ways to artists, writers, archaeologists and other foolish folk.

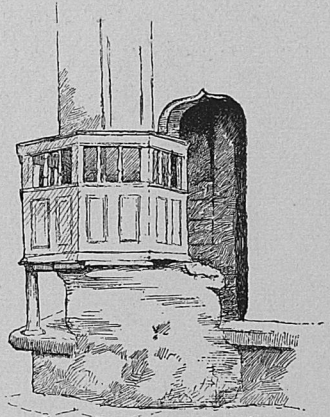
Another little point that will please the eye of the lover of the picturesque is the decided tilt of the weather-cock. The Breton peasant can arise and seek knowledge of the winds of heaven from that tipsy old vane without caring whether it points to the zenith or to Mecca—and consequently the picturesque variation in its line.

But imagine a Yankee sexton under such a contrivance! He

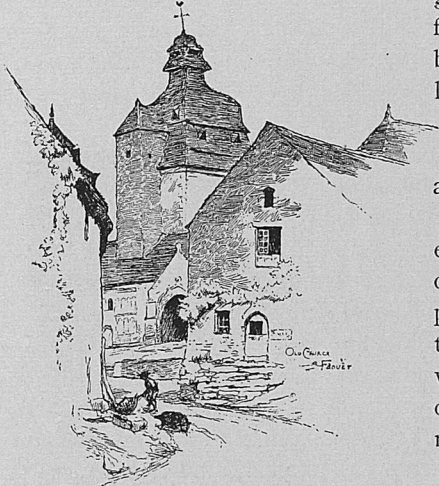
would *calculate* that the vane couldn't tell the truth except when it was on a level—and then he'd *reckon* the blacksmith or roofer would like the job—and then he'd *fix* it.

Le Faouët has its legend, too—one that tells of a bowlder loosened by a crash of thunder, and only prevented from crushing the Lord of Tolboudou because a chapel was vowed to Sainte Barbe in the nick of time. And the bowlder is there to this day to prove it.

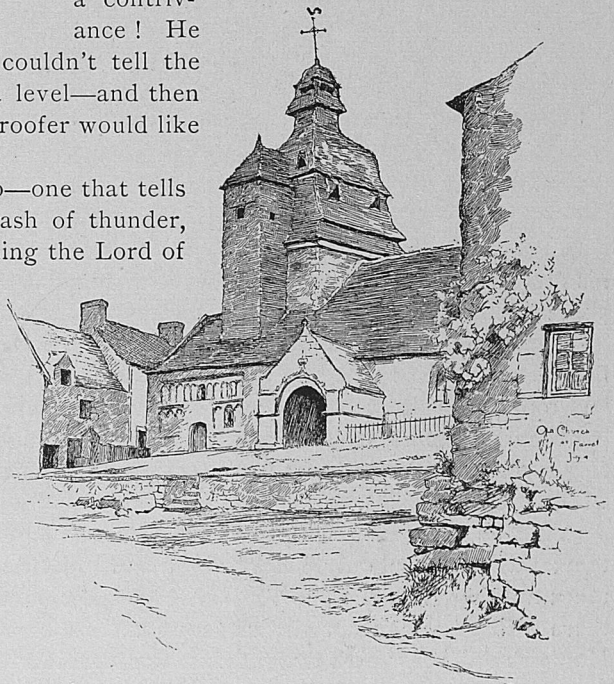
So let us be thankful that there is still a Brittany, as conservative as in the days of the Chouans, and that artists like Mr. Nettleton can use their magic pencils while the trolley-cars are still far from Sainte Barbe and Le Faouët.



PULPIT IN THE OLD CHURCH



THE ROAD TO THE OLD CHURCH



THE DOVE-COTE TOWER